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To: Andrea Mock [andrea.mock@scchamber.net](mailto:andrea.mock@scchamber.net)  
Date: 1/9/2017 12:38:27 PM  
Subject: Press release: S.C. Chamber releases the 2017 Competitiveness Agenda

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Jan 9, 2017

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## **S.C. Chamber Releases 2017 Competitiveness Agenda and Announces Press Conference**

**When:** Jan. 18, 2017

**Time:** 2 p.m.

**Where:** S.C. Statehouse Rotunda

**Why:** Business Leaders Call on Lawmakers to Keep S.C. Competitive

**COLUMBIA, S.C.** – The South Carolina Chamber of Commerce is announcing the release of our 2017 Competitiveness Agenda. As the unified voice for business in our state, we are fighting for these changes to not only keep local businesses prosperous but also to attract new businesses to the state. The Chamber Board developed the 2017 Competitiveness Agenda through investor surveys, grassroots meetings with local chambers, and input from business leaders in our state. You are invited to a press conference [January 18<sup>th</sup> at 2 p.m.](#) in the Statehouse Rotunda to listen to South Carolina business leaders explain why these changes are needed.

Chamber President Ted Pitts said, "For Palmetto State businesses to grow and prosper, we have to take steps to make our state's climate more business friendly and competitive. Our state has become the 'it' state for jobs, and we need to develop the skilled workforce to fill them. We need to finish the job for our state's businesses and citizens who need safe roads and bridges to travel and move products. Finally, our current business licensing system is one of the most business unfriendly policies that our small businesses have to deal with."

## **2017 Competitiveness Agenda**

### **Fill the Workforce Pipeline**

South Carolina's business community needs targeted strategies that will increase the number of people with the right skills in the talent pipeline:

- Apprenticeship participation growth

- Expansion of Career and Technology Education
- 0% State income tax rate for military retirement benefits
- Ex-offender workforce integration programs
- Tuition support for non-credit bearing State Licensed or Industry Recognized credentials for critical needs jobs
- Re-establishment of the Education and Economic Development Coordinating Council

## **Finish the Job on Roads**

South Carolina's business community has consistently called for sustainable, long-term funding to fix, and maintain South Carolina's roads and bridges.

- Revenue options: remove the sales tax exemption on motor fuel; raise the sales tax exemption cap on vehicles; dedicate these funds directly to infrastructure

## **Cut the Red Tape on Business Licensing**

South Carolina's small business community needs a standardized business licensing process that makes it easier to do business across the state.

- One form, one expiration date and the ability to file online through the Secretary of State

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